

# GEMS First Point School

## British Schools Overseas Inspection Report

Inspection Dates: 23–26 January 2017

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Age Group: 3-18  
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection report follows the English Department for Education (DfE) Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from Education Development Trust who spent four days at the school. Education Development Trust is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas and quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Education Development Trust is one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies, providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally. Education Development Trust employs over 2,500 staff worldwide, all working on projects relating to educational quality.

**To be recognised by the Department for Education, a British School Overseas must have an inspection report which shows that their performance against all the standards is at least satisfactory. This reflects the standards required for continuing registration as a school in England. Schools meeting the standards will have their inspection reports published on the Department's website and will be registered on Edubase.**

Inspectors report on the extent to which schools meet the relevant Standards for British Schools Overseas. The inspection follows closely the framework for the inspection of independent schools in England but, where appropriate, also takes account of compliance with local regulations.

The Standards are as follows:

1. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
5. The premises and accommodation.
6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
7. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
8. The quality of provision for boarding.
9. Leadership and management of the school.

The purposes of the inspections are to:

- help schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of pupils' education and of the care for their welfare
- provide rigorous and reliable inspection reports which help schools to recognise and celebrate their strengths and to identify and remedy any weaknesses
- inform parents and the wider public of the quality of British schools overseas by placing reports in the public domain.

The BSO inspection was combined with an inspection carried out with inspectors from the Dubai School Inspection Bureau (DSIB). The DSIB inspection evaluated the school's performance when measured against the quality indicators for schools in Dubai. The outcomes of the DSIB inspection are contained within a separate report which is available from the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai.

### Key for inspection grades

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

### Proportions used in the report

90–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
75–90%	Very large majority, most
65–74%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost none/very few

## Information about the school

GEMS First Point School is a private school catering for children from three years to students of 18 years of age. The school is located on the Al Ain Road, Dubai. The school was founded in 2014 with 383 pupils on roll. In the past two-and-a-half years, the school has seen significant growth and there are now 1,412 pupils on roll. GEMS First Point is now a larger-than-average-sized school. Sixty-two new members of staff have been appointed since September 2016. The largest national group is The United Kingdom (13%) and there are also a further 89 nationalities represented. The curriculum offered is based on the English national curriculum within an international context. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is growing rapidly. Many pupils are now joining school in primary and secondary classes. The school introduced post-16 provision for the first time in September 2016. To date, no pupils have left the school for other destinations. As a result of the school's rapid expansion, making comparisons between pupils' attainment at the end of each key stage or establishing trends over time is complex.

## Summary of the evidence base used by the inspection team

The BSO inspection was carried out by three Education Development Trust inspectors. The inspection team had access to the school's self-evaluation document prior to the inspection. Over the four days of the inspection, inspectors visited 39 lessons and held 15 meetings to interview the senior leaders, staff, pupils, parents and members of the governing body. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work as well as school documents, improvement plans, policies,

assessment information and safeguarding procedures. Inspectors generally observed the school's work and followed up on any issues raised.

## Evaluation of the school

GEMS First Point is a good school. The British-style curriculum supports pupils' good achievement in all age groups.

In **English**, pupils across the school make good progress and reach standards that are appropriate for their age and similar to those expected in the United Kingdom.

Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points and a large majority reach a good level of development before they start Year 1. Many children enter the school with little or no spoken English skills and they make particularly good progress developing these skills and their vocabulary expands rapidly.

By the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in their phonics skills is above average. In the primary classes, pupils continue to make good progress and reach standards in reading and writing that are in line with those typically found in the United Kingdom. A great number of pupils start school at various times throughout the year. These pupils are helped to settle quickly and soon make the same good progress as their new friends. As a result of consistently good teaching, the standards reached by pupils in reading and writing continue to improve the longer they are at the school. The school makes good provision for pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; as a result, they also make good progress. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make particularly good progress, especially in the initial stages of language development. Their progress is initially most noticeable in their speaking and listening but is also quickly seen in their reading and writing. Pupils enjoy discussions and, in a Year 5 class, for example, pupils had a sophisticated discussion about the new harbour development in Dubai. Pupils develop their writing skills and can express themselves well, understanding many of the strategies writers use to gain effect. They use punctuation accurately and employ a widening vocabulary.

In the secondary classes, pupils continue to develop their skills and understanding of the English language. Pupils have not yet taken public examinations but their course work, the school's assessment information and the good progress they make in lessons confirm the school's judgements that many are on track to gain standards in line with those expected in the United Kingdom. Secondary-age pupils employ technical vocabulary and study the language of poetry and fiction. They understand how language is used to portray character, for example when Year 9 pupils describe the queen in 'Alice in Wonderland'. In Year 10, pupils analyse text to show how the author uses language to set a scene and develop a character.

Students in the sixth form have only been in the school for a short period of time but are already making good progress.

In **mathematics**, pupils across the school also make good progress and reach standards that are appropriate for their age and similar to those expected in the United Kingdom.

In the early years, children make very good progress. In 2016, from starting points that were below those typical for their age, the proportions reaching the early learning goals in number and

in space, shape and measures were just above those found in the United Kingdom. Children can count confidently in a variety of contexts and recognise and write numbers from one to 20. They are able to link numbers to pictorial representation of the numbers. Teachers and other adults encourage children to use mathematical vocabulary accurately. A project on building local landmarks involved children using their awareness of shape and space to build a model of the Burj Khalifa using plastic bottles. They show a good understanding of height and measurement.

Primary-age pupils make good progress in mathematics and, at the end of Years 2 and 6, standards compare favorably to the national curriculum expectations for England. There are some differences in the rates of progress across the year groups, the strongest progress being in Years 2, 5 and 6. Leaders are working to address inconsistencies in progress but recognise there is still more to be done. Primary pupils develop many strategies to successfully calculate increasingly complex addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums. Pupils in lower primary have a good understanding of place value; they can order three-digit numbers and know the mathematical names of many two-dimensional shapes. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to apply their skills to solving problems and become engrossed in their learning. In upper primary, particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils share their answers with peers and present their ideas in statistical form. For example, pupils can accurately use graphs and charts, and calculate proportions.

Secondary-age pupils also make good progress from their individual starting points and reach standards that are above the national curriculum expectations for England. Work completed over time in pupils' books reflects the consistently good progress pupils make in lessons. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. However, the most able pupils sometimes find their work too easy.

In the secondary classes, pupils successfully build on their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding and achieve well. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high. Scrutiny of the work of pupils currently in Years 7 to 10 shows they are making good progress from their starting points. Evidence in lessons shows teachers are setting work to meet the needs of individual pupils. They expect pupils to select appropriate methods to find their solutions to increase both their problem-solving skills and their understanding of different mathematical concepts. Pupils in Years 9 and 10 enjoy the syllabus and are responding successfully to examination-style questions, which are marked and moderated using the examination board's mark schemes.

Many students who started in Year 12 in September 2016 had low levels of attainment on entry to the sixth form. Effective teaching is helping these students to make good progress and they are catching up to where they are expected to be for their age.

Pupils' progress in **science** is good and their attainment is in line with that typically seen in schools within the United Kingdom. At the start of the early years, many children's skills and knowledge in understanding the world around them are below the level typical for their age, but their good progress means they are well prepared when they transfer to Year 1.

In primary classes, pupils build scientific skills through observing, carrying out simple tests, classifying, framing questions to form hypotheses and recording information. Good progress is sustained throughout the primary classes so that, by the end of Year 6, pupils use a wider range

of methods, equipment and scientific skills across topics on living and non-living things, states of matter, earth, space and forces.

In the secondary classes, pupils acquire the skills to work scientifically, carry out experiments, and analyse and evaluate results. Even so, school leaders recognise that still more opportunities are now needed to help pupils write scientifically and are planning further Improvements. Pupils make the same good progress in physics, chemistry and biology because teachers' expectations are equally high.

In Year 12, students are helped to make good progress in their lessons, and over time, from their lower starting points.

As well as achieving well in reading, writing, mathematics and science, pupils also achieve well in other subjects across the curriculum. The school has made significant investment in developing specialist teachers and departments, such as in technology and engineering. The quality of pupils' sporting achievements is also impressive. The school is highly effective in helping pupils reach high standards in their art work. Pupils in the primary years benefit from specialist teaching and access to a wide range of provision, for example in the well-equipped drama studios.

#### **Summary of other judgements against the BSO standards:**

- The quality of the curriculum provided by the school is good (see Standard 1 below).
- The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall (see Standard 1 below). While almost all teaching is consistently good, not enough is outstanding to help pupils make greater progress to reach standards that are above average. There is some excellent practice to share further to help teachers challenge the most able pupils to make even greater progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding (see Standard 2 below).
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding (see Standard 3 below).
- The Standard for the suitability of the proprietor and staff is met (see Standard 4 below).
- The premises and accommodation meet the requirements of the Standard (see Standard 5 below).
- The provision of Information for parents meets the requirements of this Standard (see Standard 6 below).
- The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements of the Standard (see Standard 7 below).
- The leadership and management of the school are good (see Standard 9 below). However, the use of assessment information to track the progress and measure the attainment of pupils is not yet fully embedded and aligned to the requirements of the new national curriculum.

**As a result of this inspection, undertaken during January 2017, the school has demonstrated that it meets the Standards for British Schools Overseas. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government, quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and is valid for a period of three years.**

## Standard 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

The **curriculum** is good. The school follows the early years foundation stage curriculum and then the revised national curriculum for England, leading to pupils taking either the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations. All pupils in the primary and lower secondary classes follow a range of core subjects including English, mathematics, science, Arabic and Islamic Studies. Students in the sixth form follow A level examination courses which are enriched by activities such as community service.

The school's values and ethos underpin the curriculum which has a clear rationale based on the school's vision to develop pupils as skilled global citizens. This was highly evident in a pupil-led assembly in which pupils filmed around the school as undercover reporters to make sure that the core values permeated through the school. The curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of the pupils, who benefit from an approach that recognises the British nature of the school, the value of learning about the Emirati culture and also the school's multicultural context. Pupils are well prepared to re-enter the British education system. Britishness permeates the curriculum, for example, pupils in Year 2 have been carrying out work relating to the Great Fire of London. The curriculum is broad, balanced, rich and very interesting and motivational to pupils.

Children in the early years investigate and explore in all required areas of learning. They make good use of learning areas in their classrooms, outdoors and in indoor 'free flow' areas. They also enjoy learning in their Desert School.

The curriculum is based on values around respect for others. Pupils benefit from personal, social and health education (PSHE) in which they explore relationships, healthy living, democracy and social issues. They draw on current local and national news stories in the upper school, such as the UAE food bank initiative, or the impact of Britain leaving the European Union.

Pupils develop enduring skills, especially those of critical thinking and the application of skills to real situations. From an early age, children are encouraged to make choices and to become independent and collaborative learners. The school's curriculum has a strong emphasis on technology and enterprise. Pupils entering Year 10 and Year 12 have a very wide range of options, including many in technology. Older primary pupils benefit from an integrated approach to their learning and carry out a number of projects, often with a technological element and benefit from the specialist resources and staffing available.

The curriculum is adapted well for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities but is less finely tuned for the most able. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language benefit from specialist support. School leaders have a successful recruitment process and plans are already in place to increase the English as an additional language team.

There is a wide range of very popular extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is enhanced by trips locally and wider afield as when primary pupils study the architecture of famous Dubai buildings or when older pupils visit Kenya as part of their Duke of Edinburgh awards. Leaders have recently introduced a '5 to 8 curriculum' in the middle years of the school; specialist

teachers work alongside class teachers to enable pupils to access a wide range of subjects. An example of this was seen in Year 5 digital lessons where pupils were learning how to recode a computer program to make it error free and so run smoothly.

Formal careers guidance helps pupils in their choices at GCSE and A level. Plans are already in place to advise students on university applications, interview practice and preparation for post-school life.

The overall quality of **teaching and assessment** is good across the school and enables pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to acquire knowledge, deepen understanding and develop skills well in both core and non-core subjects.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive because school leaders ensure all teachers support the development of pupils' personal, interpersonal and social skills. This is reflected in their excellent behaviour, neatly presented books, positive relationships and effective teamwork and collaboration.

Teaching in the early years is strong. Children are encouraged to support one another and develop a love of learning. An example of this was seen during science lessons where children were learning about the life cycle of frogs. When asked about the difference between an egg, a tadpole and a frog one child said, 'I'm not sure yet, but I will find out because that's what scientist do.' Displays of children's work in the early years serve to celebrate their academic and personal development.

Teachers in the primary and secondary phases are well qualified and have a good knowledge of their subjects and the way pupils learn. Lessons are well planned, orderly and productive. Teachers know their pupils well and use the information they have to plan motivating lessons for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Clear learning outcomes are provided for pupils and tasks are usually matched well to pupils' abilities and interests.

Books are marked regularly and pupils' learning is enhanced when they are encouraged to respond to teachers' written feedback. Teachers also revisit this guidance and check pupils' responses. Leaders are working effectively to embed this regular dialogue, which contributes to pupils' engagement and increased understanding.

Self- and peer-assessment to promote pupils' learning further are also strong features in the majority of lessons, although this practice is inconsistent at times. At its best, for example in a Year 6 physical education lesson where pupils were taught about shot-put techniques, they provided constructive feedback to their classmates to enable them to improve.

Most teachers plan lessons that require pupils to find things out for themselves and to put forward and justify their own views. In Year 5, for example, pupils were developing their independence and critical thinking skills when planning a debate about proposed changes in the UAE. Most teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their learning to problem-solving activities.

Teachers generally have high expectations overall of what pupils can achieve and plan work to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers are skilled at checking the progress

pupils make during lessons and make ongoing adjustments to the tasks to ensure pupils achieve well. Teachers use questions to consolidate pupils' understanding and stretch their thinking. Even so, sometimes the work they set lacks challenge for the most able. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively in many lessons, and support pupils' learning well. The quality of teaching provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. School leaders are planning further improvements to this already good quality provision to meet the increasing demand as the school grows quickly in size.

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is very effective. Students have started school this year with a wide range of ability and, for some, their attainment is low. However, focused teaching coupled with students' positive attitudes, means these students have settled well and are now making good progress in all subjects.

## **Standard 2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. From an early age, the youngest children learn to get on well together and to help each other. They settle quickly into established routines and understand how their behaviour affects others. Children understand their responsibilities to clean up after activities and most do so quickly.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout the school, not only in lessons but when they are moving around the school and at less formal times. One reason why pupils settle so quickly to learning is because they enjoy their lessons. They are mature for their age and develop a very secure understanding of right and wrong. They like to support and challenge each other. Pupils' collaborative learning in pairs or small groups is one of the strengths of the school. Pupils have a thirst for learning and enjoy a challenge. Pupils in Year 5 were keen to research the development of the new harbour in Dubai and expand ideas for a debate. Many changed their initial views after careful consideration of the facts presented to them.

Pupils grow in confidence and are supported well to express their ideas and to question others, or respond to others' questions. In many lessons, pupils are able to discuss motivation for the behaviour of others and to make judgements about what may be right or wrong, for example when studying characters in literature. They show the same ability to reflect on their own behaviour. Pupils show a strong desire to help others and have very caring dispositions. New pupils settle quickly into school life as a result of the care of their peers as well as the staff. Pupils are aware of when and where to get help, if it is needed.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed explicitly through the school's taught curriculum as well as through participation in sporting, artistic, social and creative activities. Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award provides numerous opportunities for pupils to contribute to the lives of others. The school's house system also develops pupils' commitment to others and older pupils take on leadership responsibilities for the houses. Pupils apply to undertake whole-school leadership roles and compete to gain such positions. These roles are valued highly and support pupils to develop a range of very useful life skills. A much larger number of pupils benefit from having leadership roles in their classrooms. Pupil leaders

are becoming increasingly effective in their roles and are developing significantly as they start to understand the complex skills required to be successful.

Pupils are open, friendly and welcoming. They are self-confident and socially aware. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils take genuine pleasure in the achievement of others and often applaud spontaneously when a classmate has clearly made progress. Pupils take pride in their school and will voluntarily pick up litter. They understand the importance of looking after not only their school but the wider environment and helping others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils often lead on the organisation of charity work.

Pupils appreciate one another, irrespective of age, gender, race, ability or religion and both contribute to, and benefit from, the harmony created. They enjoy learning about other cultures, times and traditions and balance this well with maintenance of their own cultural identity. International Day is one of the most popular days of the year. Through many opportunities provided by the school's curriculum, pupils develop a very good understanding of local culture in Dubai and the Emirates. For example, students in Year 12 are able to debate the 'push and pull effects' which determine migration to the UAE.

### **Standard 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**

The school meets the requirements of the Standard.

Arrangements to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The school takes this aspect of its work extremely seriously and cares for pupils exceptionally well. Policies to protect and care for pupils and staff are well thought out, complying with, and often exceeding, requirements. This extends to robust safeguarding and child protection procedures. These are continually updated to reflect changes in UK legislation and guidance, addressing any newly emerging risks. Policies and procedures also meet all local requirements of Dubai. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy at school.

The strength of the health and safety policies equals the rigour with which they are put into practice on the school site and when pupils take part in off-site activities. These comply fully with local requirements and are subject to regular spot checks by GEMS Education. The range and quality of safety equipment at the swimming pool are impressive, meeting the UK legal requirements. Vigilant lifeguards reflect the school's commitment to keeping pupils and young children safe at all times. Comprehensive policies and plans to keep adults and pupils safe during a range of emergency situations include detailed route maps for evacuation from all parts of the site. These are clearly displayed and regular practices ensure that pupils know what to do in an emergency.

The school achieves an excellent balance in how staff supervise pupils by unobtrusive monitoring at breaktimes; this allows them to play and learn in safety. Security staff check visitors and are stationed at entry points to the site throughout the day. Arrangements for first aid include a well-equipped clinic and first aid boxes in key locations across the school and for all off-site visits. Admission and attendance registers also meet local requirements and are used consistently. Attendance is high with an average attendance of 97%. Pupils arrive at school punctually and are equally keen to arrive to lessons on time.

The many new pupils who join the school at all times of the year are warmly welcomed and the strong pastoral support ensures that they quickly feel part of this caring school community. The expectations for behaviour, rewards and sanctions are based on this positive approach.

## **Standard 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The school meets the requirements for this Standard.

Arrangements to check the suitability of the proprietor are robust. The chair and board of governors have high expectations of senior leaders, who are rigorous in carrying out all required checks on current and new staff members. These ensure staff are suitable to work with children. All aspects of staff recruitment and vetting are led by the highly effective human resources team within school and subject to quality assurance checks by senior staff and regular audits conducted by GEMS Education.

Staff appraisal procedures are well established and work effectively. Newly appointed staff speak very highly of the support they receive saying, 'we are looked after very well and we all pull together.' Leaders invest time and energy to ensure good appointments are made. This has made a positive contribution to strengthening the already good teaching. Leaders make sure that appropriate and well-established performance management procedures are in place to support and challenge staff who may be at risk of underperforming.

## **Standard 5. The premises and accommodation**

The school meets the requirements of this Standard.

The school is housed in a well-designed building on a spacious site. Premises are of a very high quality. Good size classrooms and corridors are light, well ventilated and well resourced. Every classroom has an interactive whiteboard. The many areas available outside classrooms and in the open air are used well for imaginative play and to extend pupils' learning opportunities. Interesting and relevant displays, often including pupils' work along corridors and in classrooms, support and promote pupils' personal and social, as well as their academic development.

There is plenty of outdoor space for informal play and sporting opportunities. There are all-weather pitches, including two covered outdoor pitches, and a large indoor swimming pool. The pool is constantly supervised and the quality of water tested daily, even when there are no swimming lessons taking place, by a member of staff who is a qualified lifeguard.

There is a large auditorium used for assemblies and school productions, the most recent being 'A High School Musical'. There are also good facilities for drama and music as well as thoughtfully designed laboratories and areas for other practical subjects. Libraries are well stocked with books in English, Arabic and other languages and numerous computers.

Dining areas are pleasant and well used by pupils. Food is prepared, served and consumed hygienically. The school is very clean and there is a regular and effective programme of maintenance. The school provides full access for pupils who have disabilities and there are sufficient well-maintained wash rooms and facilities for all pupils.

Security at the start and end of the school day is very good. There is a full perimeter wall and railings surrounding the school campus. Visitors are warmly welcomed but their arrival is monitored very carefully. Fire evacuation practices are recorded accurately.

## **Standard 6. The provision of information for parents, carers and others**

The school meets the requirement of this Standard.

Parents are highly satisfied with the school and its systems of communication. Recent innovations, supported with active participation from the parent council, have been very well received.

Parents believe that staff and leaders in the school are very approachable and take trouble to respond personally to their needs. This view starts with the admissions process where parents feel secure that their views will be considered and that their child will be welcomed. They appreciate that leaders are visible around the school and are accessible to them. Liaison between home and school is enhanced by the presence of a skilled parent relations executive who is sited in an area close to the entrance of the school. She helps parents with enquiries and points them in the right direction. Parents know that there is a complaints and feedback policy but the complaints' system has not been needed because there is ready availability of appropriate staff to address any emerging issues. Parents have confidence in the staff and feel staff listen to their views. They speak highly of the school's proactive approach if their child is absent.

Through the website and the learning platform, parents gain access to a wide range of information about the school, including its key policies and also information relevant to their own child. This may include photographs of work undertaken, rewards given, learning plans, videos and feedback on achievements.

Parents welcome reports which give detailed information and targets for their children. They also appreciate parents' consultation evenings. A few parents of primary aged children say they would like the opportunity to meet specialist teachers who teach their child as well as their form teacher.

The parent council is very active and has set up subcommittees to address particular aspects of school life. Councillors elicit parental views and are playing a growing role in school development. They have instigated successful coffee mornings, for example, where parents can meet and which are also attended by senior leaders. They also play a key role in supporting special school days such as International Day.

## **Standard 7. The school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school meets the requirements for this Standard.

The complaints' procedures are clear and information is readily available for parents. The policy is also available to prospective parents. School leaders positively promote a warm 'open door' policy, which means that questions, concerns or informal complaints are resolved quickly. The

school has not received any formal written complaint since opening. At their meeting with inspectors, parents confirmed that any concerns were dealt with fairly and in a timely manner. Parents speak highly of the principal and senior staff, saying 'if there is a problem, the parent relations executive, teachers and senior staff are very approachable and deal rapidly with any concerns or questions raised.'

## **Standard 8. The quality of provision for boarding**

Not applicable.

## **Standard 9. Leadership and management of the school**

The school meets the requirements for this Standard.

The leadership and management of the school are good overall with some important aspects that are outstanding. For example, the highly effective principal, together with the vice principal and senior leadership team, has a vision for excellence and passion to deliver a good quality education. Together, they have led improvements since the time the school opened in 2014. There is a shared expectation that everything should be of the highest quality. There is very good capacity and a shared ambition to improve the school still further. Leadership in the early years is also good. Under this skilled leadership, provision for the youngest children in the school is effective and improving every year.

Senior leaders are also skilled in developing the potential of leaders at all levels, as well as in making successful key appointments. Induction arrangements for the many new staff are effective. This enables new leaders to make good use of time, getting to know what the school does well and how provision can be improved further.

Leaders are using a wide range of information to assess pupils' progress and measure their attainment. They are currently developing a way of measuring pupils' achievement within the higher expectations of the new national curriculum. This work is at a relatively early stage of implementation.

Curriculum leaders also play an important role in making sure pupils receive a well-considered education. Leaders also make sure that provision for those who, for whatever reason, may need more bespoke support because of their additional needs, is of a good quality.

The school is owned and administered by GEMS Education. A local board of governors has recently been established. The chair of governors is leading the board in its effective management of finance, staffing, premises, admissions, staff appointments and making sure all safeguarding requirements are met. The separate responsibilities of the board and the school's professional leaders are clearly understood and respected. Governors are very supportive of the school's leadership team and are skilled at holding them appropriately to account for the standards reached across all areas of the school. The chair ensures that governors are well informed about the strengths of the school; they are not in the least complacent. This supports their procedures to appraise the work of the principal. Everyone is always looking for new ways of making GEMS First Point an exceptional school. Governors set high standards and provide the training and encouragement to school leaders so that those standards are realised.

Senior leaders and leaders across all key stages know the school's strengths and areas in need of further development. They build these priorities into a carefully planned and well-costed school development plan.

School leaders provide a positive role model for staff and pupils alike. The principal is a very positive presence around the school and is always available for whoever needs support, guidance or encouragement.

School leaders are highly effective in making sure all pupils are treated with dignity and respect. This commitment to equality of opportunity and the tackling of discrimination is evident in lessons as well as in after-school clubs and activities.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

GEMS First Point School fully meets the requirements for British Schools Overseas.

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

1. Increase further the frequency of outstanding teaching throughout the school, and challenge the most able pupils to gain even greater achievement in their work.
2. Develop further the use of assessment information to track accurately the progress of pupils and plot their attainment, aligning with requirements of the new national curriculum, across all year groups.

## Summary of inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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### The quality of provision for boarding

n/a				
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### Leadership and management

Overall effectiveness of leadership and management		✓		
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## School details

<b>Name of school</b>	GEMS First Point
<b>Type of school</b>	Private
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 2014
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-19 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	1412
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	n/a
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	AED 52,166 (average)
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	n/a
<b>Address of school</b>	The Villa Project Al Ain Road Dubai
<b>Telephone number</b>	04 278 9700
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<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stephen Sharples
<b>Proprietor</b>	GEMS MENASA Cayman Ltd

## GLOSSARY

**Achievement** – Progress made by a pupil taking his/her individual circumstances and starting point into account.

**Accreditation** – The system whereby a school or similar organisation is assessed against agreed standards and if deemed as having achieved the standards required is provided with some form of official certification or recognition.

**Accreditation Board** – The body responsible for the strategic direction, operation and conduct of the accreditation service provided by Education Development Trust

**Assessment** – The process of finding out how well pupils have learnt what they have been taught. It is a continuous process that occurs throughout the school year, using a variety of forms for different purposes.

**Attainment** – The level pupils reach, usually measured by reference to benchmarks, such as test and examination results.

**British Schools Overseas Inspection (BSO)** – Inspection framework and standards defined by the DfE for British schools overseas to opt to be inspected against.

**Education Development Trust** – Formerly CfBT Education Trust, we are one of the world's leading not-for-profit education companies providing a range of education services in the UK and internationally.

**Central Support Team** – Personnel based in Education Development Trust Head Office who are responsible for the administration of the various educational services provided to international schools.

**Combined or Joint Visit** – a BSO Inspection visit combined with an ISQM accreditation or re-accreditation visit conducted (or DSIB inspection in Dubai) at the request of the school. This will be carried out concurrently with reference to both frameworks and sets of standards. Some of the standards against which the school will be inspected are common, but some of the BSO standards relate to the British nature of the school.

**Cycle of Inspection** – The period of three years between BSO inspection visits.

**Curriculum** – The educational programmes or courses of study taught by a school including subjects and activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as extra-curricular enrichment programmes.

**Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB)** – All private schools in Dubai are required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority to be inspected by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB). A joint DSIB/BSO inspection may be requested through the KHDA's strategic partner Education Development Trust.

**Leadership** – Leadership at any level (for example principals/headteachers, governors, board members, team/subject leaders) involves setting direction, empowering staff to work

effectively, creating a suitable environment for learning, and setting an example to others. It entails different skills from management.

**Learning** – Pupils’ gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

**Management** – The practical business of running a school, department or aspect of a school’s work in an efficient and useful way.

**Ofsted** – The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills is the non-ministerial government department of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools in England and is responsible for school inspections in England.

**Progress** – The gains in learning made between two points in time. A pupil can be described as having made insufficient progress, satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress in relation to his/her starting point.

**School self-evaluation** – The identification by the staff of a school of its strengths and weaknesses across the key aspects of its performance. Effective self-evaluation focuses specifically on the impact of the school’s work on the outcomes for pupils.

**Standards** –

- (1) The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils and a school demonstrates at a particular point in time.
- (2) The evaluation requirements to be used in the inspection of British Schools Overseas.

**Teaching** – All activities undertaken by the teacher aimed at enhancing pupils’ learning.

With 40 years' experience of delivering education services worldwide Education Development Trust solely to provide education for public benefit.

Teaching and learning are the essence of what we do and we have more than 2,500 staff around the world designing and delivering services. Education Development Trust staff support educational reform, teach, advise, research and train. As one of the top 30 charities in the UK, we work for and with individuals and communities in order to help them reach their potential

Education Development Trust has built a reputation for providing high quality educational support and inspection services to national organisations such as Ofsted, the Teacher Training Agency and to schools in the north of England. Our main aim is to improve schools through high quality school inspections. We have strong values and a clear vision to deliver a world class inspection service that will directly contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and care of all children and young people in settings, schools and colleges.

Education Development Trust first delivered inspections on behalf of Ofsted in 1993. Since then we have developed our experience and expertise in the field of school evaluation and improvement to become one of the UK's first major providers of inspection services.

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